

ARUN SHOURIE

AND HIS

4751

CHRISTIAN CRITIC

ARUN SHOURIE'S book, *Missionaries in India*, has ignited intense debate — within and outside the Church. Many have said that the questions he has raised are the ones that Christians themselves should have raised, that at any rate they are questions that the Church ought to answer. On the other hand, an orchestrated campaign has been launched to paste motives on him. What he wrote has been deliberately distorted so that it could be that much more easily attacked.

To clear the air *Prajna Bharati* invited the former Secretary of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India, Father Augustine Kanjamala, and Arun Shourie to debate the questions at a public forum.

What followed was one of the few genuine inter-religious discussions we have had in recent years. It was also an eye-opener to the ways the Church functions.

Here is the record of that unique debate.

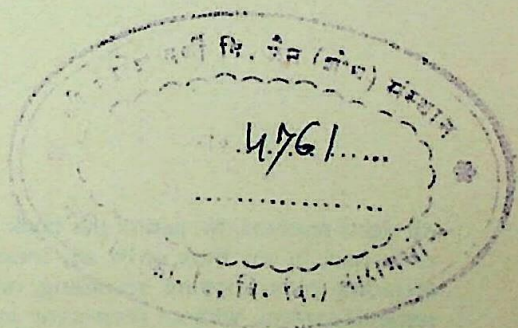
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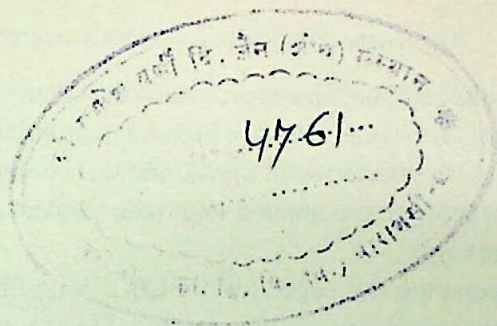
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Introduction

The Catholic Bishops Conference of India, CBCI, is the highest body for coordinating the work of Catholic churches in India. It is also responsible for initiating dialogues with other religious groups in the country. To mark its 50th anniversary the CBCI organised a series of programmes. As part of these celebrations it convened in January 1994 a meeting of Archbishops, Bishops, other senior clergy and Christian scholars and thinkers in Pune to review the work the Church has done over the last half century and to assess what it should be doing in the coming decades. The meeting lasted four days. Papers were presented. Lectures were delivered. Discussions were held.

The organisers had invited Arun Shourie to give "the Hindu assessment" of the work of missionaries in India. Arun Shourie addressed the Archbishops, Bishops and others on 5 January 1994. Everyone present heard him with full attention. The lecture was followed by a spirited and informed discussion. Winding up the exchange, Professor P. Ramachandran, who had been presiding over the session, remarked, "It has been a feast."

The organisers asked Arun Shourie to write a paper based

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on his talk and the ensuing discussions. They said that they would like to include it in a volume containing the papers and discussions connected with the Conference. Setting aside other work, Arun Shourie complied with their request and sent them the manuscript.

In preparing the paper for the CBCI Arun Shourie felt that the material would be of wider interest. He also realized that he had not been able to incorporate in it much of the material which was relevant to the topic. In his lecture and in the paper for the CBCI Arun Shourie had focussed on the work of missionaries relating to their efforts to spread Christianity in India. But he realised that this work was inextricably linked with British imperial policy. He also realised that academic scholars — Max Muller, Monier-Williams and others — had been no less eager in fortifying British imperial power in India and in ensuring the spread of Christianity in the country. He saw how the genes planted then had grown into the *fleurs de mal*, the flowers of evil which continue to poison the perceptions of our elite to this day.

Accordingly he enlarged the paper which he had written for the CBCI and towards the middle of 1994 published a book entitled *Missionaries in India: Continuities, Changes, Dilemmas*.

He sent a copy of the book to the Secretary of CBCI, Father Kanjamala with his compliments and thanks, for it was Father Kanjamala's invitation on behalf of the CBCI which had led Shourie to delve into the subject and that exploration had eventually resulted in the book.

Trouble began soon thereafter. To Shourie's astonishment, he received a peculiar letter from Father Kanjamala. It claimed of all things that Shourie had promised to make Father Kanjamala the co-author of his book! The letter was obviously an attempt to scare Shourie into limiting the circulation of the book.

Shourie was stunned and brought the letter to me and my

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friend and colleague Shri Ram Swarup for advice. The letter is so typical of the way the Church conducts its affairs, it is so characteristic of the falsehoods the Church spreads that it is best to read it in its entirety. The letter Shourie received was as follows:

18.05.1994

Dear Mr. Shourie,

First of all my congratulations for your new book *Missionaries in India*. Thank you for sending a copy by the speed post. Thank you also for your letter and kind words of appreciation.

I am sorry to mention that I am unhappy that you published our seminar material without permission. It was only a draft report which was subject to corrections and modifications from the floor. I am sending you the revised and corrected version which you may replace in the reprint of the book. That is from page 245-254.

When we met each other in Delhi in February and discussed the publication of your book you had kindly agreed to include a chapter by me, presenting another perspective of missionary activities. Enclosed please find my article titled "Hinduization or Christianization?" The article explains the process of conversion of tribals, dalits either to Hinduism or Christianity and their relative merits and demerits.

With three pieces of material from my side, i.e., (1) Trends and issues in Evangelization in India; (2) Paths of Mission in India Today [p.255 of the book] ; (3) Hinduization or Christianization, nearly 1/3 of the book contains matter from me. Therefore could I request you that my name appear on the cover page as a co-author or as one giving another perspective on the same subject. I will be very grateful for this.

Thank you for offering a discount for the Church related libraries or persons. I should frankly tell you that some people are very displeased with me for publishing the Pune Seminar material without approval. I will be glad to promote the second edition of the book which will contain some clarifications from the side of the Church. I hope you can appreciate my situation. Therefore let me know when the next edition is coming out with the revised material.

Thank you for this common search for clarification and truth.

With very warm regards,

scl/-

Fr. Augustine Kanjamala, Svd

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We saw the letter for what it was and advised Shourie to set the facts out in a reply.

Shourie was just about to leave for an extended holiday with his family. He dictated the letter. As VOICE OF INDIA was distributing some copies of Arun Shourie's book and as he was not certain of the steps that the Church might take pursuant to Kanjamala's letter, he sent me a copy of his reply before proceeding out of Delhi.

Here is the letter Shourie sent:

24.05.1994

Dear Father Augustine,

On returning home yesterday I received your letter. I was absolutely astonished to read it.

I could scarcely believe that it is the same Father Augustine who had written the earlier letters, who had been so very helpful, who had been to our house, that *that* Father Augustine had written this new letter.

Clearly you have been put to great pressure within your circle, and feel compelled to distance yourself from the book in every possible way.

But surely that way should not include falsehood. "When we met each other in Delhi in February and discussed the publication of your book you had kindly agreed to include a chapter by me, presenting another perspective of missionary activities," you write. How total a lie!

You never proposed anything of the sort.

I never agreed to anything of the sort.

And will not do so now. Please be under no misapprehension about that.

What you assert is not just a total falsehood, it is an absurd one. I have been writing on public issues for twenty years. In each of my articles — there must by now be several hundred of them in print — and in each of my books I have put forth *my* views on the issue at hand, I have documented these with evidence and considerations which have led *me* to those views. Those who hold different views have articulated them in articles and books of their own. They have often attacked in the harshest possible way what I had written. They have had every right to do so, and on occasion I had looked forward to reading what arguments and facts they would put forth. But though I have been engaged in scores of issues and controversies for twenty

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years, there has not been even a single occasion on which I agreed or would have agreed to having someone else put *his* views into a book or article I was writing and then put his name as a co-author. During these years I have had occasion to work with scores and scores of colleagues. Many more have joined issue with what I wrote. They have thereby got to know the way I work, as well as what they say is the determination with which I hold to a view once facts have led me to it. To all of them your assertion would not only be so manifestly a concoction, it would be laughable one : had you consulted them before composing your letter they would have told you that it was just not in my nature to have ever agreed to doing anything of the kind.

Therefore, please be assured that in no edition of a book authored by me will I agree to include material which you or others in your hierarchy think the book should have. And please be assured as a consequence that your name will not appear as a co-author.

Nor does the absurdity of the falsehood end there. For, throughout, *you* were the one, on behalf of the CBCI, who was urging me to send you a manuscript based on my lecture which you would like to publish. That is, far from your being a co-author in a book I was writing, you were urging me to contribute an essay for a volume the Church was planning to bring out on the proceedings of the conference. Perhaps it would help you if I recall what you wrote on the matter.

In your letter of 11 January you wrote :

"First of all let me express our sincere thanks for coming to Pune and addressing the participants of our National Consultation on Mission. Inspite of your busy schedule you were kind to accept my invitation. Your talk was scholarly as well as challenging. The fact that the audience wanted to continue the discussion after you had spent nearly two hours with them shows the keen interest the audience had in the subject and your critique of the christian mission. May I request you to give the presentation in writing. I intend to publish the talks of various speakers of this Consultation ..."

Please read the second paragraph and ascertain who was asking whom to contribute to which volume.

I sent you the completed manuscript on 20 January. In the letter which accompanied the material, and the original of which you have, you will find the following :

"... I am enclosing the write-up you have asked for. I think it covers all the things I said at the meeting. I have supplemented

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the remarks by including in the text passages from Swami Vivekananda, Gandhiji etc. which formed the basis of some of the things I said. I have also included a few references to the Secretary's Report and the Background Paper which you gave me. The text should be printed in a continuous format, with each section being given a number and title. At the bottom of the opening page please add the following footnote 'The author has supplemented what he said at the meeting with textual references. These formed the bases of many of his observations, but could not be read out at the meeting for want of time.' ..."

Again there is no ambiguity about who had asked whom to contribute to which volume.

You acknowledged receiving the material in your letter of 9 February. You wrote :

"Dear Mr. Shourie,

Thank you very much for your letter and paper 'Missionaries in India' dated 20th January. When it arrived I was out of station and after my return I was busy with a few other meetings. Hence the delay in acknowledging. In spite of your busy schedule you were prompt in completing the work and sending it to me. I appreciate it very much.

From the point of publication, along with other contributors, I find it very long i.e. 65 pages, around 16,000 words. Is it possible to cut it down, say, to 10,000 words ? ..."

You will see that there cannot be any doubt at all about the fact that the position was the exact opposite of what you seek to portray in your letter — that I was not the one who was asking *you* for material to be published in the book I was writing, but that *you* were the one who had sought material from me for a volume on the proceedings which the CBCI planned to bring out.

During your visit to our house — on 27 February — you suggested that there was some difficulty in the Church publishing what I had written by itself, and that it would be published along with responses from six or so persons who were now working on the matter. I alluded to this conversation in the introduction to the book, which was written soon after this visit of yours. Please see the second last paragraph of page xii of the book. It reads :

"Just a while later I was told that they would publish what I had sent them, and in addition responses to it that some of those

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present were now going to write."

The other suggestion you make is equally without warrant. You say that I have used CBCI material without permission. Please recall the facts :

— You had first written to me on 5 October, 1993, inviting me to address the bishops and other missionaries ; we then talked over the telephone ; I agreed to deliver the lecture, and, by way of preparing the lecture, I requested you to send me the assessments which the Church itself had made of its work; you sent a copy each of the Secretary's Report and the paper of the Working Group — incidentally, these had not reached me before I had left Delhi, and I got them upon my return from the conference.

— When I reached Ishvani Kendra you again gave me the Secretary's Report and the note of the Working Group, alongwith other papers.

— I referred to them and quoted from them in the essay I sent you; in fact you will find a reference to my having done so in the letter I wrote on 20 January forwarding the essay : it clearly states, "I have also included a few references to the Secretary's Report and the Background Paper which you gave me ..."

— These documents were referred to and quoted in a series of articles which I wrote at the time; that series was carried by the *Maharashtra Herald* of Pune, along with over a score of other papers; a lively discussion ensued in the *Maharashtra Herald*; you and your colleagues at Ishvani Kendra could scarcely have missed it.

— Neither in response to the essay I had sent you directly, nor in reference to the articles that were published did you in the slightest suggest that there was anything tentative about the two documents.

— The documents were distributed at a seminar, they were given to me and sent to me by you - the Secretary of the CBCI. Nowhere on the documents is it said that the text was tentative, nor is it said that they were for private circulation.

In a word, these were public documents given to me by an official of the organization concerned.

And I have clearly indicated their authorship: on the page of contents; throughout the text of the book whenever reference is made to them; in the very title of each document in the Annexure; and in the Index.

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To top it all, when you visited our house I gave you a full account of what the book was going to contain. I distinctly told you that I would be reproducing the two documents as Annexures so that the reader may receive the Church's own assessment, and also so that he may get a glimpse of the state of the Church as an organization — the very words I had used to introduce the two documents in the manuscript, words that you will find printed on page 244 of the book. You raised no objection at all.

You say in your letter, "I hope you can appreciate my situation." I do indeed, and that is why I have set out the facts. They should leave no misapprehension about any subsequent editions of the book, should these become necessary. The only thing I will be prepared to do so as to assure readers that you are in no way responsible for the contents of the book, that you and the Church in fact disapprove of much in it is to print the letter you have sent me, alongwith my response. I might do so in any case if this matter proceeds further.

As for what may be done, I would urge that, instead of trying to force a chapter of your's into my book, you or the Church publish the critique on your own. The Church has a vast organization and vast resources at its disposal to do so, and a very vast network to distribute the critique. And that is what it has done in the past. You will recall that when some of Sardar Panikkar's writings were not to its liking, when the Niyogi Commission's Report was not to its liking, it published a book of its own about them. Cardinal Gracias himself wrote the foreword. Had the Church insisted that further editions of those writings must contain its reactions, it would not have been able to get its point across.

I conclude in the hope that this sudden turn is a cloud which will soon pass, and that we will soon resume our cordial relations. But as of the moment you will pardon me for saying that the only thing about your letter for which I am thankful is that it arrived yesterday. Had it reached two days later I would have missed it. For early tomorrow morning I leave for five weeks.

Best regards.

Yours Sincerely

sd/-

Arun Shourie

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Controllers of the Church seemed to have realised what they would be in for if they were to persist in the concoctions which they had put out through Father Kanjamala. Even before he returned from his holiday a letter arrived from Father Kanjamala in which the good Father attributed what he had written to a "misunderstanding". Shourie wrote back to him saying how happy he was that the cloud had blown over.

But once again he had reckoned without the Church. A series of articles started appearing in different newspapers, especially in publications of the Church itself in which Shourie's book was not just traduced but in which completely perverted accounts of it were published. Father Kanjamala was in the forefront of these traducers. Articles by him appeared in the *Maharashtra Herald*, in the *Deccan Chronicle*.

As the controversy snowballed PRAJNA BHARATI, a forum for thinking and discourse with its headquarters at Hyderabad, invited several senior churchmen to discuss *Missionaries in India* on a public platform with Arun Shourie. One after the other they pleaded one reason or another and begged off. At last, Father Kanjamala himself agreed to deliver his critique at a public meeting and have Arun Shourie answer. It was agreed that Father Kanjamala would present his views first, that Arun Shourie would respond thereafter, and that each of them would then answer questions which might be put to them by the audience.

The hall was packed. The lectures of the two and the discussions lasted close to three and half hours. There has been a persistent demand since the exchange for a written version of what transpired. VOICE OF INDIA is pleased to publish it. The text which follows is almost the verbatim account of the debate — except that words have been added to connect sentences where this was necessary; similarly, where the speaker said, "He says" or "It says here" and the meaning would have been

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clear to the audience but will not be to the reader, what was meant by "He" — say, Father Kanjamala, or "here" — say, the book *Missionaries in India*, has been substituted.

The criticisms that Father Kanjamala advanced and the replies that Arun Shourie gave are themselves of intrinsic interest. But the reader will find the exchange to be instructive in another, in fact in a more significant sense also. As one reads what Father Kanjamala asserted one will begin wondering how it is that a careful scholar like Arun Shourie could have made the sorts of mistakes which Father Kanjamala is alleging, or how Shourie could have been guilty of misrepresentations which Father Kanjamala is alleging. It is only when he reads what Arun Shourie says that he will realise how this worthy representative of the Church has been peddling half-truths and untruths.

Had Arun Shourie not been present the falsehoods and fabrications of the Father would have carried the day. They would have remained in the minds of the audience. The mere fact that the person about whom the falsehoods were being spoken was there, the fact that he was naturally well enough acquainted with his own book to immediately nail the falsehoods made all the difference. This is an important lesson in itself — for half-truths and complete concoctions are devices which the Church like the Communist parties of yore and others, uses unashamedly and ever so often. I would hope therefore that when readers come across claims or charges put out by the Church they will go to the original source and, if possible, contact the person against whom the Church's invective is directed. They will then learn not just the truth about the person or facts in question, they will learn the truth about the Church.

New Delhi,
15 January 1995

SITA RAM GOEL

Fr. Augustine Kanjamala's Critique

Respected President, the organisers of this evening's convention, Mr. Arun Shourie, and respected friends and audience:

I am very grateful to Prajna Bharati and its organisers for inviting me to share my thoughts and reflections on Arun Shourie's book, *Missionaries in India*. I would like to look at this book and the main arguments within the wider context of today's ethos in India, particularly the ethos of communal tension, conflict and various violence and crimes related to that. In the context of the ethos, definitely we need a dialogue, a debate to move towards a better understanding and creation of a new India and a new society. In the very beginning itself, I am aware of the limitations of the debate, particularly when it comes to matters of religions and matters pertaining to values, the reason for this being that it is easy to establish many things true or false if it comes exclusively under the purview of empirical rationality, a rationality into which the modern world including India is moving in. However, in contrast, when we begin to discuss and debate on human values and religious values, we are not able to enter into that realm of rationality which is characteristic of empirical sciences.

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My subject this evening is *Missionaries in India*, not missionaries in general. The Christian missionaries are portrayed and presented by Mr. Arun Shourie in his latest book on the same topic. Why did Arun Shourie write this book? In the beginning of the book as well as the concluding of the book, he tries to communicate towards the idea that his final concern is to protect the integrity of the nation. Everything must be seen — including religious, groups, linguistic, cultural groups — from this overall main concern of the integrity of our nation. In that sense, his concern is a noble one. However, the presentation of the book which you who have perhaps read it will see, is that this integrity of the nation is being presented as if being threatened by a certain group of people including the Christian missionaries. Therefore, the concern is from this perspective of presenting — that missionaries of that group threaten the nationality or integration of the country.

Whom do I visualise of his readers? Naturally, of an eminent author, his readers include the general public. But I feel that the book is written with a specific people to cater i.e., it is aimed at people who are keenly interested to know and to react and to respond to a certain group of people whom they consider to some extent enemies of the nation or its integrity. And this history, particularly the antagonism towards Christian missionaries, is not new. We have a rather well documented anti-missionary literature at least for the last 100 years.

For example, starting from the writings of Arya Samaj, we have got the later organisers and activities related to the movement of Rashtriya Swayamasewak Sangh, the literature and the activities of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, particularly in Madhya Pradesh, the policies and attitudes of the Bharatiya Janata Party, Vishwa Hindu Parishad and many other groups and their writings, literatures and statements in relation to the Christian missionaries.

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Therefore, it is rather clear for me that the book is written in favour of or appeals to those who are specifically interested to read this type of literature which in some way challenges or questions or provokes the Christian missionaries. Therefore, the book is written not only for whom but it is written against whom. It is written against the missionaries in India which according to some of the groups mentioned earlier are considered to be the enemies of the nation, particularly they are cited by them in times of the activities of the Muslims or also the activities of Christian missionaries.

The major part of the book covers, I would say, two periods of history. That means, the first part to a great extent deals with the missionary activities and the literature produced by the missionaries or their supporters during the colonial period. The second part deals with the missionary activities and literature covering the post-independence period. This must be kept in mind so that the validity of the argument may be placed in proper context and not be placed in abstraction.

Therefore, I begin with the first part, that is, mainly analysing and examining the source materials of Arun Shourie's book. That means the area and the period covering the colonial period.

And I want also, in the very outset, to point out to you that these materials are of two different natures belonging to two different periods of history. And therefore it may be inappropriate to mix them. So their validity and argument which pertains to one period may not be necessarily applicable to another period. Perhaps one of the confusions in reading the book for many readers would be, not being taken into consideration the term "time span".

When I say, which are the main sources on which Arun Shourie has relied, I would mention two or three main

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categories of literature. One, the European authors or missionaries who were sympathetic and supportive of the Christian missionary activities. There are very many names mentioned. But a large amount of material is directly quoted to substantiate Mr. Shourie's position.

For example, the writings of Charles Trevelyan. Arun Shourie has directly quoted 25 pages from this author. He began to write in 1838. That means, about 155 years ago. His views and the activities which were going on in the country in those days are taken, and analysed and envisaged to conclude that probably Christian missionaries today also are labouring under the same world view, the same mission theology and missionary methods. Another important author whom he has quoted elaborately, continuously, is Richard Temple. Fifteen pages are quoted continuously. He began to write his literature from 1883. That means, most of the materials which Arun Shourie is providing was written 110 years ago.

These were, of course, civil servants and people in the administration.

He has got two other very important authors to be mentioned who were Indologists. Among the European missionaries as well as administrators, there were two different, distinguished categories. One is known as the people who were sympathetic to Indian literature, Sanskrit literature and writings. They were known as Orientalists. And others who were more in favour of the use of the Western or English education, literature, science etc., which would be expected gradually to undermine the superstitions and ignorance of the so-called ignorant people at that time in their understanding. Therefore, among the Indologists, we have the references from Max Muller, we have reference and ample quotations from Monier-Williams. Max Muller's writings started from 1886, over 100 years ago. The other author's literature and

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writings started in 1878, 115 years ago.

Then, we come to the Indian authors who are profusely quoted. Mahatma Gandhi, for example, his conversation with Professor Krzenski from Poland, a missionary. Gandhi's writings of 1937, that means 55 years ago. There are some reference to Vivekananda's writings, on his attitude towards the missions. There is considerable quotation from Niyogi Committee Report on Christian Missionary Activities published in 1956, mostly centered around the enquiry committee on the missionary activities in Madhya Pradesh. It is also known as Niyogi Committee Report headed by Mr. M.D. Bage.

What I am trying to say from these references is that Arun Shourie's literature and materials belong to another age, a bygone age. To a great extent, vast part of their world view, mission view, mission theology, concept of salvation, the role of Christian missionaries in the folk dance of evangelisation, or in some extent also an idea of conquest, all belong to another age.

The overall style of the presentation of Arun Shourie's book seems to me — and also the people who read it feel — that it is quite aggressive and its interpretation of the data is and attacks are to some extent exaggerated. I do not say they are false. Because to prove his position, he has quoted the data as given by us. At the same time, the interpretations seem to me to be to a great extent exaggerated, and this is also the view of the many other important Christian missionaries, bishops, priests who read the book, and have given me some kind of reactions.

Why do I say that Arun Shourie's strategy is specifically negative? He has a hidden agenda in the publication of the book. Apparently, it seems to be a great concern about the integrity of the nation and the unity of the nation, etc. But there is a hidden agenda. Precisely I say there is a hidden

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agenda because in reading through 250 pages of the book, I could hardly find even one paragraph which states something positive regarding the work and contribution of the missionaries in our nation. We have got missionary activities, of course, during nearly 400 years ago, but the more intense type of missionary activities during the last 150 years. We all grant that they have done many mistakes but many unbiased, open searchers of truth also simultaneously state that these missionaries have also done many good things. I wonder why Arun Shourie fails to mention some of those things in his book. Or when he has mentioned them, he has mentioned saying that they have done — for example, schools or other activities — but for what purpose? These activities were not meant in themselves but primarily and exclusively as a means of conversion. Therefore, the target of the book is missionary activities aimed at conversion.

You know some of them. For example, take eminent scholars like Bede Griffiths who lived and worked in India for over 50 years and died two years ago. He had an ashram in Trichy. Take the writings of Klaus Klostermaier who spent many years in India including Vrindavan and has written many books on the Christian activities and relations with Hindus. At present, of course, he is living in Canada and teaching in the university. We have literatures of four eminent scholars like Abhishiktananda. For those who are familiar with the Christian literature, he was the Frenchman who lived in India and took the form of Hindu sanyasa, and studied Hindu scriptures and said how to relate, in this new age, the relation between Christianity and Hinduism. He spent many years in the Himalayas. He died and was buried in Indore in M.P. There is Sister Sara Grant, another English nun over 70 years old now, living in Christa Prema Ashram in Pune, and her well-known writings in English for India as

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well as for outsiders. We have the literature of Fr. Amalorpavadass who started various activities and renewal programmes in the big ashram in Mysore. We have the books and publications of Fr. Amaloor, another eminent theologian from Tamil Nadu. We have the writings and publications of Raimundo Panikkar, internationally known professor and scholar of comparative religion from Kerala. We have eminent scholar like M.M. Thomas from Bangalore, and many others whom you can quote as individual scholars.

We have the official teachings of the Catholic Church, particularly related to the Church's attitude and relations with the people of other religions published during and through the Vatican Council in 1962. There are many Indian official documents following the lead given by the Vatican Council. The bishops and theologians of the country have made reflections and consultations and stated their policies and programmes in relation to that. These are found in very important documents. But none of these are mentioned.

And finally, very important, Arun Shourie was invited to Pune to share his views. We gave him certain materials. And at the end of the Seminar, we brought out a statement on the reflections of the Christian missionaries in relation to their missions, thinking and activities in India for today and for the near future. It is published under the title "The Path of the Missions in India". I gave this copy to Mr. Arun Shourie. One I sent by post which he received. Second I gave him by hand. It was the beginning of March. I was in Delhi for the CBCI General Body meeting. I went to meet Mr. Arun Shourie about which I had informed him already, to renew our friendship and to meet his family members, when he treated me very graciously. I have pleasant memories of that. But I also gave this booklet. I have a few copies. I will give a copy to the organisers. You can go through it. I wonder why Arun

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Shourie did not quote even one sentence from this document, which is the final statement of the Pune Consultation on Mission, while he amply quoted data from the other two documents. One is the kind of theological document prepared for consultation. Second one was the report of the Survey which we conducted regarding the missionary situation in India. I was in-charge of conducting the Survey in the name of the Bishops for the last three years and we have prepared a tentative report which was given for the study before the conference so that we can have a fruitful discussion on the floor for 5 days and come to an understanding, — a re-interpretation of the Christian Mission at the threshold of the second millennium. And this Arun Shourie did not use at all while he used other materials very generously. So, I am wondering what his reason was for very purposefully avoiding this beautiful policy statement. Again, it is for me to give an indication that he was interested to use only those materials which suited his target, that is, to use for finding faults with the missionaries and their activities.

I also would like to say that the recent Christian thinking on missionary activities has come out with a very positive attitude to all the world religions. Naturally, this change in the theological perspective also brings in a certain amount of — if you want you may call it a situation of uncertainty of the transitional period. We know that any idea, let it be religious or scientific — these ideas are not easily accepted, whether new or to some extent radical, by the majority of the people. Our ideas are being inculturated in our minds through value systems and other mechanisms which would take definitely many decades for incorporating new ideas. Therefore, naturally we are aware — and all the priests and missionaries sitting here would agree with me — that there is a certain amount of tension and conflict within the Church, and all

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may not be here fully in agreement with the new theological perspective. In other words, in every group — in politics, in culture, in religion — there are some who are looking ahead and some others who slowly catch up. We must give, particularly in the field of religion, ethics and morality, what we call a field and experience of cultural lag; always the practice may not commensurate with the theory we propose. So, naturally there are problems.

At the same time, it is glad and happy event to rejoice that the old attitude of enmity — Christian attitude to other religions — we have passed through that attitude of enmity to an attitude of empathy and appreciation. We have rejected the exclusive idea that salvation is possible only within the Christian churches. On the contrary, we have an inclusive concept of salvation which says that generally and for all the people, the means of salvation is their own religion and life, according to their good conscience. So, we are not rejecting anybody from that perspective.

I would mention the recent survey I conducted from every state in India, from priests, sisters, bishops, etc. There is a movement, i.e. nearly 85% of the respondents have said that their primary motive of missionary activity is not to conversion. In other words, the primary motive of the vast majority of the Catholic missionaries today is not to conversion. Only a minority of 15% have said that they adhere to the traditional view. This is based on an empirical data, views which have been collected from thousands of people. It is not according to my imagination or my projection or somebody else's imagination.

Therefore, the attack on the concept of missionary activity primarily aimed at conversion — that is the main target of Arun Shourie's attack — this is proved to be empirically unsound. Here also, in our new changes, the missionaries are

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moving from an idea of the Church being foreign in its worship model, in its organisational activities, in its mode of work etc., to an idea which is more in tune with the cultural sensibilities of our country.

It is also very significant that the old idea of the mission was salvation of the soul. This is an idea not exclusively found in Christianity. We also know that this was a primary concern of Hinduism and Buddhism, etc. Scholars in world religions termed them in terms of other-worldly attitude — little concern about the problems of this world, which is transient, which is Sansara, which is not very important. What is important is the Mukti, the Salvation, the Nirvana. In contrast to this totally other-worldly attitude of the mission, the present trend emphasizes goodness of this world and therefore also the need for true work towards liberation of people who in many ways are not only spiritually enslaved or in bondage, they are also slaves of many systems, traditions and customs and ignorance and superstition and unjust social structure. That brings in an exclusive brand of Christian theology, known as Liberation Theology. Many of you are familiar with it and Arun Shourie also uses it but uses it primarily for fault finding, some kind of an attack, in the sense that this Liberation Theology is creating only certain amount of disintegration of the country, tensions and conflicts, unsettlement. Therefore, is it serving the unity and well-being of the country?

Therefore, further you say that any missionary activities which are concerned with the well-being of the people and the country are to be subjected to public scrutiny. I agree in principle that every activity must be subjected to scrutiny. But who will scrutinize? The Government which are biased against Christian missionaries or even the court or some other group? We also know, to a great extent, the decline of the parliamentary system and the judicial system in our

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country. Who is the scrutinizer? Many of the scrutinies can be very well twisted and we are all crying for justice. Therefore, while on the one hand, there is need for scrutiny, I grant, but who will scrutinize?

He is also aware that the movement of conversion in this country, particularly among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and some backward communities etc., is simultaneously also a protest movement. Conversion is a protest movement, not necessarily only for spiritual salvation, not necessarily for economical development. It also takes place, no doubt, for example — an important example — that Ambedkar and his disciples in 1956 made mass conversion to Buddhism, as protest against the status quo. Here also, a similar event on a small scale recently took place in Patna a few months ago. That is from the point of view of Buddhist conversion. Conversion to Christianity is also to some extent, a protest movement. They are protesting against the status quo, and the kind of injustice they are suffering in the present structure of society — to a great extent, not exclusively, not totally. The continuation of your past is very much influenced by the mentality of the caste. So, those who are outside the caste, those who are considered to be the Panchamas, who are considered to be untouchables and so forth, the moment somebody promised that they will be liberated, these people in large number went to the missionary. To what extent, their expectations were successful or completed, they are subject to some form of investigation. To some extent, definitely there are improvements and progress but at the same time, in other areas, there are limitations. Because even in the Church, there are characteristics of caste practices.

There is also reference to North-East, particularly the area where North-East is unsettled, missionaries should not enter.

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I feel that the North-East area is not primarily a missionary problem of unsettlement. There is unsettlement in Punjab, there is unsettlement in Kashmir and so forth. I do not feel the common factor in these areas is religion. But the common factor is state boundaries or boundary states with other political sensibilities, and the common problems must be sorted out more from a political and economic perspective. Actually, religion has also influenced, no doubt. But it is not the primary cause. If Christians are looking forward for separation and secessionist movement, why there is no such movement in Kerala? Over 30% of the Christians in this country are in Kerala. They are economically and politically well placed. There is no political unrest in the name of religion. Nearly 65% of the Christians in this country are in South India — the four States of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. How much missionary unsettlement is there in relation to North-East, Punjab or Kashmir? If religion is the main factor, we should find them here also. Therefore, my contention is that while religion influences, the major forces of unsettled reality, political reality, must be sought in the political process and in economic factors. We should not lose the priorities.

Therefore, in this context, the concluding remark is that if the Christian missions acknowledge the possibility of salvation in other religions, what is the usefulness of Christian Mission? This is a question asked in the book. I would briefly answer and say that first and foremost, the present understanding of the Christian missionary activity is this that they love, that they themselves are converted and witness God's love in whatever situation, which is clearly expressed. Mission is the process of bringing God's love to the people, particularly to those who are less fortunate. Therefore, most of the missionaries, as I said, have moved away from conversion and church admission to the new concept of Mission which promotes love, justice,

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peace and human dignity, and they are working for these objectives. In this process, if they are attracted to join this band of men who are committed to love, justice and human dignity, we say, we welcome you and you are invited. Nobody is pressurised to become a Christian. This must be very clear to this august audience. You can testify for yourself how many of you have been pressurised to become Christian in the past. So, we work for bringing God's love to the people, and for that our motivation and our example is Jesus Christ. Therefore, Christian contribution was made by the people who were in service, Government officials, missionaries and scholars who have made so much effort.

Ultimately, Christianity is 2,000 years old in India, missionary activities date back to nearly 500 years and hardly 3% have become Christians. Therefore, I do not think that there is any threat for Hinduism or any religion in this country even from a numerical perspective because they are an insignificant minority, particularly in the Hindi belt where they are being strongly attacked either in terms of ideology or in terms of physical attacks on the missionaries in recent time e.g. in the last year alone. Priests were killed in Orissa recently, and also in Madhya Pradesh and in U.P. Sisters were murdered in Bombay. Sisters were raped in Punjab and at a few other places. And many other things are happening which show that the attack is not only on the ideological level, it is not only on the books but it happens on the physical level. That is a very sad reality to which the educated community is responsible.

The Christians in this country are educating for the last 100 years 10-12% of the students and children of this country. How many of them are converted to Christianity? In many of the schools, particularly in the Hindi belt, the Christian students in the schools are less than 1%. They are serving our Hindu brothers and sisters, our Muslim brothers and sisters, irrespective of

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religion, caste, colour and creed. 15% of the sick people in this country are being served by the Christian missionaries, and particularly by the Sisters. The weak and the poor, many who are unwanted, are being taken care of, particularly those who are thrown out, for example, lepers, destitutes, orphans and many who are unwanted. If 2% Christian community or 3% Christian community can take care of 10% of education and 15% of medical care, I wonder why not 80% of the Hindu brothers take a proportionate responsibility? (*Clappings*.)

Therefore, we have pledged ourselves to serve this country and its people. At the same time, we have said many things. Things are not going to be solved by a debate because we are entering an area of commitment, belief and values. Argument alone will not move a man to action. There are deeper courses operative in me and in you. People like K.M. Panicker, a staunch critic of the Christian Mission, he was willing to admit that the great tradition of the Indian Constitution, particularly caring for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, is because the Indian Constitution has emulated the noble example of the missionaries who went to the service of these under-privileged people.

For instance, how many people are willing to go, let us say, to Arunachal Pradesh? I know some of my friends who travelled in the month of April in Arunachal Pradesh, 200 kms. by foot to meet a Christian community because in Arunachal Pradesh no priest is allowed to stay. But during Christmas and Easter times, with the permit of the Government, they are allowed to go there and render some service. The physical facilities, infrastructures are so poor that there are no roads, no vehicles. I know my friends who travelled 200 kms. by foot. Who will dare to go? Even if you are given Rs.5,000 or Rs.10,000, you would not go.

In 1972, I was a humble simple missionary in Orissa in the jungles and among the Adivasis. I went walking those

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mountains and hills, and I said to myself: the Government has set apart crores of rupees for the progress and development of the backward people but hardly anybody comes here. I do not blame them because money cannot bring them there. In those days, to be frank with you, as a member of a religious community, excluding my board and lodge I was getting Rs.30/- as pocket money per month. Even for Rs.3,000, nobody would go there.

Therefore, I say that it needs a faith that commits yourself to your unfortunate brothers and sisters. It is not easy. It is very painful. We have only a very few people who are willing to be on the side of the poor and the marginalised. Gandhi tried his own experiment. We know what happened after Gandhi. There were many brave people trying against many of the oppressions and the caste system and so on. But we know why things are moving so slow.

Therefore, friends, we need people with faith and I conclude this session with a prayer, a prayer said by Mother Teresa and her community for every day morning prayer, because Arun Shourie has not spared even Mother Teresa in his book. I believe that the majority of the missionaries with their limitations more or less try to live up to this ideal. That is the reason, I pray this prayer:

Make us worthy Lord to serve our fellowmen throughout
the world who live and die in poverty and hunger;
Give them through our hands this day their daily bread;
and by our understanding love,
Give them peace and joy.
Lord make me a channel of thy peace.

This section was taken from the famous prayer of St. Francis of Assissi.

Lord make me a channel of peace.

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But where there is hatred, I may bring love;
Where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness;
Where there is discord, I may bring harmony;
Where there is doubt, I may bring faith;
Where there is despair, I may bring hope;
Where there is shadows, I may bring light;
Where there is sadness, I may bring joy.
Lord grant that I may seek rather to comfort than to be
comforted;
To understand than to be understood;
To love than to be loved.
For it is by forgetting self that one finds,
It is by forgiving that one is forgiven,
It is by dying that one awakens to eternal life.

I would thank once more the organisers. I thank you for your patient listening, and I thank particularly my friend Arun Shourie because we need people like Arun Shourie to challenge us so that we can rectify our mistakes and all together collectively move towards the creation of a new India, a new humanity.

Thank you.

(Applause)

Arun Shourie's Response

Mr. President, Fr. Augustine, I begin with the things on which there is complete agreement.

The first point is that the work of Christian missionaries quickened the movement for reforms within Hindu society. Second, that in many areas their service has been exemplary. Father Kanjamala has enumerated two — education and medicine. There are other areas also. If we read Vinoba's Lectures on leprosy work in India, he says that the inspiration came from the work of Christian missionaries. Third, there is absolutely no doubt about the dedication of individuals over this long period. Fourth, there is no assertion whatsoever by anyone that I know of in a responsible position in Government or public life or public discourse against the right of everyone to propagate his faith. You are creating a straw man, a scarecrow, and trying to defend yourself from it.

First, an important difference. It is very important to remember in the case of the Christians in India that they, unlike, for example, the Islamic community, are open to a dialogue. Father Augustine has come here. The Catholic Bishops Conference of India is the largest and most important body

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coordinating the work of the Catholic Church in India of reaching out to other religions for dialogue. Father told us that they held a review to mark their 50th anniversary, the second time in 50 years, the first time in 25 years. As he rightly said, they asked for presentations from non-Christians. This is a very fine example for all of us to follow. We have, in our country, suffered from the lack of dialogue and in my own book I have said, if we were only to learn this one thing from them, our country would be so much better off. I will long remember the courtesy with which they treated me, the patience with which they heard me ...

Islam had stamped out dialogue in India by its verbal terrorism. In Islam you just cannot talk about it at all. Hence, problems have been continued and walls erected. But as Father Augustine's example shows, as the CBCI's example shows, by talking things out, by speaking what is in our heart — Gandhiji used to say, "If there is sedition in your heart, speak it" — we can bridge chasms. So, there is no disagreement on this. And I consider it a matter of great gratitude for me that Father Augustine has taken the trouble to say what he thinks, to point out so many defects in what I have written. It is to me a matter of tribute that a person who must be preoccupied with many things in the work of the Church has taken the time to do so, and, as he said, Bishops have taken the time to read an extended version of my lecture and to give him their reactions.

I am sure, Father, you will now do me the courtesy of listening to my paying you tribute, in the same manner. I will take seriously what you have said and talk to you frankly, not in the hope only, but in the certainty that you will pay as much attention to what I have to say as I would always pay to what you say.

Now, the first point that struck me as I listened to this

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fine person is the manner of his presentation. It is quite scandalous, and I will give you five examples to begin with. He said that there is hardly a paragraph in this book in which the positive contributions of missionaries are mentioned. Sir, at the very beginning of the book, on pages 4 and 5, I will read you some things. "What impression then does a person of my background, conditioned or informed by these sources, reach about missionary work in India? First, as Gandhiji used to say, the work of missionaries quickened the efforts of Hindu reformers to set our own house in order. The missionaries' zeal to convert Hindus and the realisation that they were specially targeting the sections which had been trodden down lent an urgency to the determination of reformers to work for the uplift and integration of these sections into the rest of Hindu society. Even the denunciations of Hinduism and India by the missionaries served a purpose."

As Swami Vivekananda and Gandhiji showed repeatedly, the denunciations were based on gross exaggeration and, just as often, on wholesale distortion. Father Kanjamala says they were mistakes of a bygone age. *Mistakes!* I have reproduced here what used to be said about the temple in Jagannath Puri by the most responsible missionary groups in memoranda to Parliament: "We have seen as eye-witnesses a hundred thousand people being crushed under the Chariot; so, stop these grants." And the person who was the Collector at that time, wrote to Parliament, "This is a complete lie." Both things are quoted. A mere *mistake!* Listening to him, I was reminded of Ghalib:

ki mere katl ke bad usne jafa se tauba

Having cut off my head, she foreswore cruelty,

hai, us zood-pashema ka pashema hona

Ah, the repentance of one who is so promptly repentant...

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But these served a purpose. Ever so often, as Swami Vivekananda and Gandhiji pointed out, they were put out for the crassest purpose. The lurid accounts were used in the U.S. and U.K. to raise money for financing the activities of missionaries. My book reproduces the illustration at the back cover of one of these tracts published by a London missionary society, the Religious Tracts Society, in 1898. The idea was, this is the hell Indians live in because of Hinduism; see how great and urgent is the need to save souls; therefore, give us money. Yet, the denunciations served a purpose. The reformers were hastened in their work; the people were made more quickly aware of the defects in our society than they might otherwise have been.

The example of the missionaries had directly positive results too. Vinoba Bhave, for instance, remarked that missionaries set the example in leprosy work which was then taken up by others in India. To take an instance from a completely different field, the diligence with which they studied the scriptures of other religions like ours works as an example to this day.

Next paragraph: "There are also the direct effects of their work in establishing a number of educational institutions, a number of hospitals. Generations of young men and women have received modern education; many of them have been endowed with ideals of service and uprightness and rectitude because of the educational institutions run by missionaries. Similarly, lakhs have been saved," not one but *lakhs*, "and restored to health by hospitals set up by Church affiliated organisations. The Christian Medical College at Vellore has long been a norm for our country. Even more important than the direct service which these institutions have rendered is that through decades and decades in the face of widespread break down, they have maintained high standards. In this,

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they are a lesson and an example for our country."

Yet, Father Kanjamala says, *not one paragraph!*

Second, he said, we were the rulers. You say, Government was with us, we have so many missions, we have so many hospitals; 10 per cent of education, 15 per cent of medical health is with us; could we not have converted more? *Baba*, people may not have been converted because of the inner strength of Hindu society. Conversions did not take place *in spite* of you.

And, you say, Arun Shourie studied in a Christian college, his sister studied, his wife studied, his brother studied, his wife's sisters studied, his mother-in-law studied in such schools and colleges. Did anybody try to convert him? Why does he — that is me — not mention that example? See, he asks us. Why has he hidden that? Because it was not convenient for him to say so. That is Kanjamala's reasoning.

My dear friend, it is because it was not convenient for you to read my book. Just see pages 232-233. Please be patient because I really feel that it is not Christian rectitude which Father Kanjamala has displayed today. Bishop Patrick De Souza of Varanasi, when I was speaking in the question hour, he asked : "I have a comment more than a question. I know that Gandhiji said those things about the motives behind missionary services like education, medical services etc." Gandhiji did not say that the purpose was conversion. And Father Kanjamala misrepresented me saying that I said that. It is *the missionaries* who told Gandhiji, "Yes, our purpose is conversion." And those conversations are given verbatim. What else do you want me to do? Look at your apologetic literature of today, your whitewashing of today. You see, at that time, they were the partners of an imperial power. That gave them candour. There was nothing to hide. Today, they want to present themselves as victims; three per

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cent only have been converted, they intone.

But I am on the point of fact. Why does Arun Shourie not mention his own example?, you say. Did anybody try to convert him?, you ask. Maybe, those who were trying to teach me had a better idea of me than you do.

But I want to say something else. So, he said, schools and hospitals set up by Christian missionaries are everywhere, and if there was any truth in this view, all of India would by now have become Christian. This has not happened. Is not the accusation itself motivated?

And do you know to get an accurate account of the questions and of the persons who had asked the questions I wrote after my lecture at Pune to Father Kanjamala himself: "Please send me the questions; please send me the names of the persons so that nobody can later say..." He was kind enough to send these. Now in response to this particular question what I said there is reproduced here in the book. Just see what I said. My own experience, Father says, why does he not refer to it? In the lecture I said, and in the book I wrote "My own experience would point to what you say. I studied at a college set up by Christian missionaries; no one ever tried to convert me." Father, you do not mention that. And it goes on.

I went on to explain why India did not get converted. The reason was that during Islamic rule conversion followed because the State had acquired power. Islam was a tribal religion and, therefore, it had no compunction in conversion. The protection of law was available only to the persons who converted. By the time Christianity became an ally and British imperial rule was established in India, Europe itself had changed. Ideas, notions had been humanised; Christians had been humanised so that overt use of State power for conversion could not be done. That was the reason. And I gave an

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example. I said, you take the Indian Constitution of today. Just leave it as it is. Just add one clause: "The Fundamental Rights guaranteed in Chapter III shall be available only to Hindus." In 25 years, you will see in which direction conversion takes place. People will reconvert to Hinduism. This was the secret of Islam. But the same thing could not be done by Christianity. That was the secret. That I go into there in the book. As far as my own experience is concerned, it is set out in the book.

Father Kanjamala said just now, he says, "He has not even spared Mother Teresa". And this is the way he began his own article also in the *Deccan Chronicle*. I just want you to see what I have said about Mother Teresa and you will see the kind of dishonesty — I am very sorry to say, as I mentioned, it is a very harsh accusation to say of a Catholic priest that that his speech does not reflect Christian honesty. Here it is on pages 7 to 9. I said, I quote, "An official publication of the Catholic Church published in 1956..." What is happening is that loss of political power makes people whitewash things and put things under the carpet. In 1956 political power had been lost, but the old habits of candour were still there. The text of this guidebook is given in a Government Report. It is called *Catholic Dharam ka Pracharak*. It is a book of instructions for the preacher of Catholicism in India. It says, "To gain access to non-Christian households, the preacher should know something of medicine. He will then be sought after whenever there is some illness in the house. Once there, he should try to prevail upon the parents that he should be allowed to baptize the child as the baptism would aid the child's recovery."

Father Kanjamala says 85% of the priests do not want conversion, but the Church wants them to do this. If they do not agree, if the parents of the sick child do not agree, what

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should the priest do? Just see: "If it is clear to you that the father is not going to agree to the child being baptized, and, as far as you can see, the child is close to death, then on the *pretext* of administering some medicine, sprinkle water on his head in some secret way and pronounce the words of baptism. O Preacher, should the child die, you would have opened the gates of heaven for this child. Is this not a good deed? Now, if every preacher were to devote himself to this work, then how many children would they send to heaven in a year?" (*Applause*)

And the Church gives the same advice in the case of an adult who is dying: "If the relatives of a dying man do not let you sit in the house, then explain to them that knowing you is no bad thing. The All-powerful God can cure the man. If this device does not work, then, using the *excuse* of administering medicine, seek leave to go near him. In short, use all devices to save his soul..."

This is not 150 years ago, my friend. This is not some academic writing. These are instructions to the Catholic preacher. Issued in 1956. In this context in my book comes the passage on Mother Teresa. We can see what this incongruence is. I am explaining in the book at that point this incongruence. On the one hand, the new doctrine says salvation is possible for everybody through all religions. On the one hand, you are saying 85% of priests do not believe in conversion being their primary activity. On the other side, these instructions are there. Is this not incongruence? So, I said in the book, "We can see what this incongruence would spell even in the noblest example." Now see, please read and compare his sentence that I have not spared even Mother Teresa. Then you will get the truth behind his sweet talk.

You see, there is a Sufi saying: "A perfumed scorpion does not become any less poisonous because of the perfume."

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(*Applause*) This is what the book says: "Mother Teresa is the symbol of service and compassion for all Indians today. Her compassion and care encompass all: not for a moment does she wait to learn the religion or race or caste of the one in need." It's there in the book: "Her humility, her nobility, her service are of a *saintly* order." What more would you want me to say? "And there is no doubt that in her case it is her faith in Jesus which has called forth service of such an order. Yet, even to such saintly efforts, what would the orthodox doctrine of the Church impart?"

Not Mother Teresa. What would *those instructions* impart? Because the instructions tell you: convert the people, put some water, mumble some words. So, that is the question which is asked in the book. And I said that the anxiety to save souls, and the premise that a person in that destitute and desperate condition, in that agony, a person that close to death would be better off, that he would be saved if he were to mumble a few words before breathing his last, connoting faith in Jesus, that is an incongruity.

Then I point out and I, in fact, specifically said in the next sentence, "On both counts, the anxiety is beyond our grasp. That the ultimate object — I am thinking, not of Mother Teresa now, but of all the missionaries who acknowledged to Gandhiji — is to convert the man robs from the nobility of the service." On the other side, the premise is also incomprehensible — that a man in such a state will be better off if you mumble something, some words about Jesus, rather than about Rama or Krishna. Now, how do you read into this that I am traducing Mother Teresa? But here and in his articles we have a Catholic priest saying this.

Take the next example. He says, we have now a new ecumenical doctrine that salvation is possible through all religions. Arun Shourie mentioned this, but only to ask: "Then,

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what is the purpose of *missionaries* of the Mission in India, of *missionary work* in India?" That is not what *I* have asked. But it is a typical misrepresentation. I have asked that if you say that salvation is possible in all traditions, then what is the justification for *conversion*? (*Applause*) Now this kind of a sleight of hand is — I cannot say painful, I cannot say it is something I foresaw, but it does no credit to a serious dialogue.

I will give you a fifth example. The burden of his presentation was: this fellow is quoting only nineteenth century documents, 1920s' documents. Firstly, you show me where you have denounced those documents. You see, there is never a right time to examine their work. In the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, you could not examine their work because they were the allies of imperial power. If you examined it, there were all sorts of consequences which followed. If you do it now, you are talking of the past. But you are not disowning the past, nor the books and wrong things which were said. In my book what Charles Trevelyan said is quoted over 25 pages. If I had quoted only five pages, you will say, *arre*, he is quoting only what is convenient, out of context. So, I give it to you at length, and I do so so that the reader will himself see the continuity. Charles Trevelyan was a formulator of education policy in India; Macaulay, his brother-in-law, only wrote the Minute. Sir Richard Temple was the Governor of three of our Presidencies — Bombay, Madras and Bengal. And these rulers worked in collaboration with the missionaries, as they themselves said, and I have quoted their writings to that effect, not one sentence but at great length. Then you complain: he is quoting at length!

But I want to mention another point. It was only after a very long time that Father Augustine mentioned that I had

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also quoted two documents — of *December 1993*. I was asked to give the lecture on the 5th of January. Documents prepared by him as the Secretary of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India and the Head of a team conducting a Survey of all Catholic priests in India — a Survey which had taken probably two years — and a document prepared by a Working Group set up by the Catholic Bishops Conference of India — that is what I quoted. What could be more authentic? He says, I asked for them. *Of course*, I asked for them. I wrote to him; I told him on the telephone also: Please send me your internal assessment because I will then be better prepared for talking to you. He sent them. Then, when I went there they gave me the documents again. I therefore have two sets of them! And I have them *here*, I actually found that they are in my file here. Here are two of them. You show me the words which say 'Draft'. You show me where it says 'Draft'. It does not. When I used them, then they suddenly remember, *baba*, Draft, Draft.

And now you say 'unethical'. I am quite used to this kind of word being used against me. Devi Lal used it; Gundu Rao used it; now the Catholic Bishops use it. It is *your* lack of ethics, and your embarrassment at having been candid. Yes, you did leave with me your document or what you call your final document of your deliberations and I did not use it — because it is completely a whitewashed document. The documents I have used are the candid documents and I have not quoted just a few passages. This book was published at my own expense. Yet I have devoted *sixty* pages to reproducing their entire text. But that has embarrassed them even more. The entire text is reproduced. So, suddenly this new defence comes up that these are Drafts.

So, that is the mode of discourse in the light of which the other things that Father Augustine has said and which have

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been written should be assessed. I will now proceed to assess some of these things.

What is his first defence or his first point? It is that those were mistakes. If you read what they wrote and the systematic way in which they wrote it, you would not think it was a mere *mistake*, you would not think that the word 'mistake' is appropriate. Then he says, they are of a bygone age. That was the age of candour and, much more important, I will show today — I would not have done it, but for hearing what Father has said — I will show today, that that mindset continues.

Before I do that, there are two other points. The reason for exhuming that literature is that this is a study as much of British imperial policy, and because, as I mentioned at the very outset, in the mindset of the Indian educated elite, these notions have been drilled into them. This sophisticated slander has been internalised by the people, by the elite, and, therefore, the whole country, that is one of the reasons why the country is bewildered. It does not know what to do. Therefore, it is necessary to always keep reading and thinking about that literature. In the very title, I have mentioned: "Missionaries in India — *continuities*." So, every passage included there is there to have the reader ask whether there are continuities or not.

The second word in the sub-title was '*changes*'. I faithfully reproduced the changes which were enumerated — not by these persons, I mean Bede Griffith; my friend, if I wrote on people like Bede Griffith, you would take me to defamation courts — I have taken the official documents of the Church and I have faithfully listed what are the changes listed there. That word "*changes*" is on the cover. And the changes are explained at great length in the text.

And the next word is '*dilemmas*' because in their own report and in their documents, they show, "Yes, we have

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adopted these changes, but these have led to great confusion." So, I have pictured those dilemmas. That is the purpose.

And you say that you have changed a lot. But till the mid 1950s, as I have mentioned to you, this is what you are writing, and I quote: "Rama was not such a person, one who could bring solace because, *being a sinner*, he could not grant peace to his devotees." — not 150 years ago, but in 1956. You cannot write this now because political power is not there — "He himself died and did not rise again."

Your claim on behalf of Jesus is that he died and rose again. All biblical scholarship shows that not to have been the case. I can set out in great detail the results of that scholarship. I would request Prajna Bharati to have a reading of the four Gospels here and I will show you the dissonances in them. But to proceed with what you have been writing.

"Whereas Lord Jesus Christ lives for ever and protects his people. But, Rama, Krishna, Mahadev, etc. cannot confer salvation as they themselves were *encoiled in vices of various kinds*. The Hindus describe the *sins* of Krishna as having been greater than of men anywhere, that he was a *thief* and *evil doer* and a *bad man*" — not 150 years ago, but recently — "It is well known that he killed the innocent Kamsa by *deceit*. It is very foolish to depend on such a God. And then many people believe that Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh will save you. But all your books describe how they are *lying fallen in the nearest well*. Thus, they are themselves powerless. Indeed, one needs someone to save them too. From the Gods to Brahma, they are *all in the grip of sin*. Nowhere in the Hindu Shastras is it stated that their gods led any pure sort of life. On the contrary, it is written that all their Gods were *great sinners and evil doers*. It is written about their special Gods — Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva — that *because of their*

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licentious conduct towards the wife of Atri, they have all been born again." You say, I have been quoting only from books written 150 years ago? "The idols that are found in their temples and the devadasis and the dancing girls who serve in those temples *do nothing except corrupt the devotees*. The dharma of the Hindus is an illusionary religion, a religion of superstitions."

My friend here says I have a hidden agenda, and he ascribes motives to me. My friend, I do not need to hide my agenda. Today you need to hide it. (*Applause*) My agenda is to save our country, your country and mine, from this calumny. "Therefore," continues this Christian publication, "anyone who makes an idol, venerates it or has it venerated is ignorant and a sinner" — except those who make and venerate the idol of Virgin Mary in Kerala and who pray to St. Xavier in Goa who asked for the Inquisition being established in India. "From the Shastras and Puranas, it is clear that all the Gods and Avatars *were in the coils of lust, anger, greed, obstinacy and pride*. It is not appropriate that at this point we set out the evil deeds of these Gods. Their characters are described at length in the Shastras and Puranas and from them we come to know that these Gods perpetrated many kinds of condemnable things. *They were sinners all*. And now say, whether it is right or wrong to worship a *sinner* or the idol of a *sinner*. Some of these Gods *committed sins with the wives of others* and because of the *lust and evil* in their hearts they fell in the bondage of the wives of others and so lost control on themselves."

Contrast this with what Father Augustine has just been saying, with his sweet poison. "When these Gods did not have even this much strength and control as to vanquish their evil desires, when they did not have strength enough even to stay out of the coils of such women", — what would

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you say, Father, if somebody wrote this way about Jesus and Mary Magdalene? — “then who shall deem them to have been strong? Now when you learn from their character and conduct that your own God used to commit heinous sins shamelessly, shall you shirk from sin? It is by reflecting on the affairs, the lives, the thieveries, the evil and sins of these Gods and Goddesses that we say that he who worships them shall never be better than them. Someone has well said: ‘As the Teacher, so the pupil.’”

I can go on reading this to you. And suddenly we are told, this is all 150 years old, that it was a mistake! The truth is simpler: You are not able to print such things now, Sir, because of changed circumstances.

Now, there *has* been a change. Father Kanjamala is right and really the whole world, not just Indians, not just Christians, but the whole world owes a debt of gratitude to a person like Pope John who worked so tirelessly to bring compassion back, who organized the ecumenical councils where this doctrine was promulgated which I have taken diligent note of in the book. Now the fact, it so happens, is that the Church in India itself is very nervous about this new ecumenicism. They are taking credit that we now accept salvation in all traditions. So, where is the quarrel, Father Kanjamala asks. But see what the Secretary's Report — no draft report — says about that ecumenical doctrine. “The most powerful traditional motive of mission, the salvation of even one soul,” — salvation as defined by that *Catholic Dharam ka Pracharak* — “is weakened with the theology of salvation in each religion” — because then the priest says, why should I convert? This effect of the new doctrine is pointed to as a *defect* and the report notes it with great concern. Now they say, for 85% of the priests conversion is a third priority. But in the report it is *a matter of concern*.

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In your report as Secretary you wrote, "Ecclesio-centrism gets only the third priority. Only 10-15% of the missionaries are considering this as their first priority." I can read out several other passages to the same effect. This is what I was pointing out — that, yes, there *has* been change, but that that change is, firstly, not fully accepted by the Church; second, if that change is actually accepted then where is the question of converting others?; third, if you are right — I will come to whether that is so just now — that force, fraud and allurement are not being used in conversion, why do you oppose a Bill — as happened in 1977-78 — which says that conversion by force, fraud and allurement shall not be allowed? Why are you upset about it?

So, the next point is that actually the means have not changed that much. What has actually happened is that Christianity has really lost its foundational beliefs because of the progress of science and technology as happened with the case of Marxism, as I am certain will happen with Islam. It lost those foundational beliefs. You say every word in the Bible is true. But the Book of Genesis cannot now be believed nor the story of Creation. Father Kanjamala said, "The Copernical revolution has come." My friend, when Copernicus gave out his version, what did the Church do to him?

The claims of the Church have been undermined even more by biblical scholarship. It has now been seen that on every single point in the life of Jesus, far from other historical evidence, the four Gospels contradict each other completely. I can give you at short notice several such examples. His birth is in Bethlehem or Nazareth: Bethlehem is in one corner and Nazareth in the other — two versions; the date on which he was born — several versions; the year in which he was born — several versions; his genealogy is given in two Gospels

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— Luke and Mark; it is traced from David to Joseph. In one Gospel, between David and Joseph there are 25 persons. In the Gospel of Luke, between the same David and the same Joseph, there are 40 names! It is not only that there are these many more names, not *one* name other than David and Joseph is common! The Last Supper is described in one form in one Gospel and in a different way in another. In one version, Judas takes the money first, then points to Jesus; in the other, he is paid later. The Resurrection accounts differ completely; the accounts of his trial differ completely; and it has now been well established by the work of Christian scholars that the whole... Father Augustine gave the example of Nazis persecuting Jews — that was the most recent persecution of Jews. It is the *Christians* who have persecuted the Jews for 2,000 years; and it has been shown by Christian scholarship that the whole effort to shift the pronouncement of death sentence upon Jesus from Pontius Pilot, the Roman Governor, to the Jewish Council was an act of fraud by the leading Fathers of the Christian Church. I can show you here and now, if you want, after the question hour. I am not out to prove these points; this is not my field of specialisation, but I am certainly reading your books better than you think.

So, there have been these changes. But the Church in India is not able to accept these changes properly. And the means are not that different. This is shown in an intelligence report submitted to the highest levels of Government. If I may disclose to you, I have quoted this report faithfully on pages 205-207 of the book — in the context of the North-East. Father Augustine, it is a report of the Joint Intelligence Committee of the Government of India headed — incidentally by a Parsi now, not by a member of RSS — where the concerns are documented in detail. I have that report. And I tell you in front of so many people here that I will show this

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to you personally, and to the Chairman. All I have done is to remove the names of the persons because where it says, a meeting took place in Manila where — let us say Shri Choudhury, our President here — went; Shri Choudhury went and there he was promised two hundred and fifty thousand dollars for doing this work under the guise of development in such and such a part of the North-East. I have removed Choudhury's name from there, because if I do not do so it will be clear to the reader and, therefore, to those persons that there is an informant in their circle. Now, such reports give in detail the means which are being used. They are the same — fraud, allurements; force alone you cannot use now. That is the one change.

I must say there is also another change which once again I would not have brought up here, but for the manner in which Father Augustine presented his thesis today. And that is that there is a certain, a new deviousness in insinuating your ideas into the minds of innocent people. First, till the mid '50s the propaganda was brazen, as in the sorts of passages I quoted. Now there is a deviousness, and quite helpfully for me, Father Augustine, his usual helpful self, has provided evidence of this new method in his articles in *Deccan Chronicle*. Just see. He writes: "After their conversion they were taught to believe in a new complex order of supernatural beings. This included the mystery of Jesus Christ, the incarnate son of God (Avatar)" — So, you want to tell the poor Harijan: *arey bbhai, yeh bhi to ek avatar hi hai* — "as the new and powerful saviour. The God of the missionary was proved to be more powerful than their traditional spirits and Gods because they were saved from social oppression, their property was redeemed and they enjoyed security under the protection of their new religion and its preachers." Actually, their own documents which I have

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quoted at great length in the book show that there was no change in the social status of converts, that there was little change, that the discrimination against the dalits continues to this day in the Church itself, and that they lament this fact and say this is creating great problems within the Church.

"Caste system, caste system" — that is the great charge. And according to these missionaries the great advantage of Christianity is that it does not recognize castes. Have you seen a Catholic priest or a Bishop or Archbishop protest against the Supreme Court giving reservations to Christian dalits ? In fact, they have been agitating for this. If there are no dalits among you, if you have abolished caste, why are you asking for reservations ?

To continue with Father Kanjamala's article: "The new group of supernatural beings included blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and the company of numerous angels and saints performed" — as they were told, these poor tribals were told — "various services to satisfy the needs of the people. For example, St. Patrick protects them from snakes." You see somebody worshipping the tree or some other Gods to protect them. We have also got it — this new drug, St. Patrick. You see what the belief or superstition is and provide him a gilded version, a gilded pill for that same superstition and call that "liberation".

Not only that, I see in all this that sophisticated slander, it was brutal and candid slander earlier, it is sophisticated slander today. And again I will give you some examples. Just see how this is written. This is Father Augustine writing in *Deccan Chronicle* — "Replies to Arun Shourie": "Harijans worshipped deities of lower rank while caste Hindus worshipped deities of higher rank. For instance, Hanuman (Monkey God) is worshipped by the Harijans and Rama is worshipped by the upper castes in the same village." *Wah wah!*

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This is the knowledge of the Church about Hanumanji! Such scholarship! I cannot imagine that this is the *knowledge*. This is the *insinuation*, it is *deliberate distortion*. And he continues: "Hanuman was the servant of Rama; Harijans are servants of high caste Hindus. A close affinity between their hierarchy of Gods and the hierarchy of society." That is not written 150 years ago, Sir, *you* wrote it and just *last month*.

Just see the next paragraph! "Dietary and food habits were subjected to changes which had great significance in the eyes of the caste Hindus." Now just see, how the insinuation is brought in. "Christians reformed the diet habits. This offended the caste Hindus." What was the diet habit that the caste Hindus wanted to protect? Now just see. "Dietary and food habits were subjected to changes which had great significance in the eyes of caste Hindus. The most important improvement was controlling the habit of excessive drink." See the juxtaposition. Dietary habits, Caste Hindus, Excessive Drink.

Well this is what you have written, and then you say that I am unfair. Sir, as Clive said when he was being impeached — they charged him: "You took so much money" — he said, "Sir, in retrospect I am only surprised at my moderation." Given what you have been perverting, what you are insinuating about our society now, I am really surprised at my own moderation. But in a revised version, I will include all these examples.

Not only that, the same mindset is at work. What do you regard 1857 as? It is the first fight of freedom for India. But as you know, right after that, within two years, in 1859, a historian was brought from England to provide what would become the standard interpretation of that war. That is Keith's history, that it was not a War of Independence, it was just a set of local *chutput*, insurrections here and there, that

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there was no national network, there was no national ideology, that it was a mutiny against legitimate power, that the feudal chiefs like Rani of Jhansi or Tantia Tope were not fighting for the country; Jhansi was upset because her son was not being recognized; Tantia Tope was upset because his pension was not being given. This is the history. If you today try to change that, you are communal. What is Father Augustine's view of that history? He writes, "after the Indian *Mutiny* of 1858" — the same mindset. I will show you a continuity.

Just see his view of the North-East. He has been Secretary of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India, of their highest body. He has just told us that that mindset is not a danger to the country. See what he says about the North-East: "The North-Eastern Zone, where nearly 17 per cent are Christians, has the second largest concentration of Christians in India. Ethnically linked to the Mongoloid race, they have in general experienced a great geographical as well as social distance from the rest of India." This is exactly what the Naga, and other secessionist groups are saying. "Numerous agitations and separatist movements in the past were violent manifestations of a prolonged alienation. It is not surprising that they have also kept a considerable social distance from Hindus and Muslims after experiences of exploitation and shown a great openness to Christianity until today." And he goes on in that vein. That is the mindset.

The next article begins with the North-East. He talks of tribals. What does he say about tribals? That they are Animists, and that Animism is different from Hinduism. Now I will tell you where this word comes from. It was decided upon in the late 1870s. This is the point of my book. This mindset continues to this date. Father Kanjamala has written, not 150 years ago; he is writing now. And this is not just a person like him. His

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articles are a very well considered, drafted and redrafted reply which has been published in several newspapers including *Maharashtra Herald*, *Deccan Chronicle*. This is the reply of the Church. So, tribals are different from Hindus; they are Animists. Now this is exactly, *exactly* what the British set out to do: We must take these tribals out of Hindu society. How should we do that? We must reclassify them in the Census. They are not to be regarded as Hindus. They are to be regarded as Animists.

So, that is what happened from the Census of 1891 onwards. That sequence is given in detail in the book.

Now, what did the Census Commissioners — British officials and practising Christians — say about this device of sawing off tribals from the rest of Hindu society? The 1901 Census Report noted, "The dividing line between Hinduism and Animism is uncertain. Like Christianity and Islam, Hinduism does not demand of its votaries the rejection of all other beliefs; and.... amongst many of the lower caste Hindus, the real working religion derives its inspiration not from the Vedas, but from the non-Aryan beliefs of the aborigine." That is 1901. The 1911 Census noted the same difficulty: our enumerators are not able to distinguish tribals from the rest of the Hindus, that enumeration is coming to depend on the idiosyncrasies of individual enumerators. By 1921, the Census Commissioner had been stretched to the extremes. In the 1921 census report for Bihar and Orissa, the Commissioner said: "In the case of all other religions, there is one main underlying difficulty, namely, the difficulty of saying where Hinduism begins or ends, for all these religions represent either offshoots from Hinduism or the great outlying mass of tribal religions from which by insensible degrees converts to Hinduism are continually being recruited." So, these officials said, please give this up.

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Colonel Luard wrote in his report of the 1921 Census covering Central India: "The classification, 'Animist' has never been satisfactory, and it would be much better if it were to disappear altogether." But under missionary pressure, in conspiracy with the British Government that classification was continued. To say these are not Hindus. Exactly the same, the parallel operation was done in regard to the Sikhs in Punjab. There is a famous work of 1903 by Macauliffe. The title of it tells the tale: "The Sikh Religion and its advantages to the State." In a previous book, I have quoted the report in which they said that in the previous censuses these people — the Sikhs — were being classified as Hindus "which, in fact, they are"; but now we have given strict instructions to the enumerators not to treat them as Hindus, to put them instead in the other column. That was the device; you find that same thing insinuated, not 150 years ago, not in 1871, not in 1921, but in 1994 August!

Sir, *hum bekbabar to hain, par itne bekbabar bhi nabin*

In the article Father Kanjamala says, and he said just now also, that it is because of the persecution and injustices of Hindu society that people are flocking in their millions to Christianity. Actually, the problem is, as your own report shows, that they are *not* flocking in the millions. Dr. Ambedkar's conversion is mentioned there. It has been mentioned today also, that it was a conversion of protest. My friend, the thing to remember about Dr. Ambedkar — there are many things to remember about him; I do not want to go into that controversy just now — Dr. Ambedkar had fallen prey to this very device and agreed to a separate electorate for untouchables in 1932; therefore, Gandhiji had to go on a fast unto death. If you all say 1942 was a great thing, what was Dr. Ambedkar doing then? He was a Member of the

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Viceroy's Council, my friend. But the point for the moment is that his commitment to our country was never in doubt. And if I may say so, the entire Hindu society owes him a debt of gratitude because the point of his conversion was — that he did not become, nor did he allow his followers to become Christians.

In your newspaper article and today also, the second example you gave was, conversion of dalits to Buddhism in Patna. You did not read that the Rally was a complete flop. A great *jbagra* (controversy) came up on the stage itself because it was found that it had been financed by a Christian group. (*Applause*)

You say your heart bleeds for the dalits? You are the patrons of people like Rajasekhara Shetty and Kanshi Ram and the poison which comes from them emanates from you. (*Applause*)

That is what Gandhiji used to say. Gandhiji and his Sarvodaya followers opened a school in one tribal area. The missionaries started protesting. In his conversation with the missionaries, Gandhiji said: if you are interested in the emancipation of the tribals, why do you protest if somebody else also goes and opens a school? After all, everybody wants them to be educated. It is because your motive is ulterior. Now in the mid-'50s, as recorded in official documents, you see that when Government, under Panditji's leadership, started tribal welfare schemes in Madhya Pradesh they were opposed by the Christian missionaries there. Exactly the same thing has been done against the RSS work in Madhya Pradesh today among the tribals. Your work is secular; RSS work is communal! Because once RSS or the Government machinery comes there, then your main stock-in-trade, saving souls by enrolling them in the Church, is no longer possible. Why do you oppose others who come to work in the area —

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if anybody else comes and also works in the tribal area, your effort in educating us certainly proceeds, there is no problem for it.

It is time to close, and I want to do so by drawing your attention to two other things. Because it will take a long time to go through many of the other things that Father Kanjamala has said, I am giving you only the tenor of his arguments. There is one thing on which I agree with him completely. In his article, he says: "In the post-independence era, the Government as well as many other agents of modernisation are systematically working to help the SC/ST and OBC people to enter into the mainstream of Indian society. And most of these people are also struggling to catch up with modernisation." Actually, modernisation, if I may, as a friend, warn the Church, is bankrupting their business. Christianity has been finished in Europe and North America by modernisation. That is the reason why you are targeting poor countries like India with that much greater force. You have been aiming since the 16th century to convert the untouchables. You have not succeeded very far. But now what you say is happening — modernisation — is exactly what is removing that potential target. Your scholars used to write: If the shadow of an untouchable falls on a South Indian Brahmin, he has to bathe six times. Everybody goes in overcrowded buses and trains today. Does any one first find out whether the person pushing him is an untouchable or not? (*Applause*)

Scholars tell us: caste is about purity; purity depends on intake; therefore, there are strict rules, regarding the persons from whose hands I can take water or take food. And you would capitalise on that and quite rightly so. That people were being seen as non-humans. But today everybody is wanting Municipal water. They are not finding out whether

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a Harijan or a Brahmin is working in the Municipal Water Works. So, this modernisation which you want to help, is a thing, I feel, we should all help together. But I warn you, it will remove your potential target.

The next point is very important. The essential feature of modernisation is rationality. Intellectualisation of life in general demands similar intellectualisation in the area of religion. Otherwise, the process will lead to intellectual incongruence and emotional tension in people. That is your point. For that reason, when you convert somebody, please inform him of the results of biblical scholarship — that not a point about Jesus's life survives. I have as much veneration for him as everybody else. I can say that as a Hindu, you have only now begun to say that as a Christian. But your claim was that Christ is a historical figure and see these Rama and Krishna are myths, apart from being thieves and lechers!

That was always an absurd point. Historicity is not important. Everybody sitting in this room is a historical figure. Does that make us distinguished? No. It is Jesus's Ministry, it is his sacrifice, it is his unshaken belief, which everybody venerates. But that historicity which you held up as proof of your Church is now completely punctured by biblical scholarship. When you try to convert somebody, because you do not want this emotional tension, please inform him of the results of that scholarship as your commitment to rationality demands.

What is the problem? All Europe and America are discussing it, why do you not allow your followers also to do so? You have such enormous resources to spread Catholic literature, Christian literature, why not give Christians here rational evidence also, which Christian scholars have themselves come to discover? That there are interpolations in the Bible for instance. The very passage in the Gospel in which Jesus is said to have said in effect, "Go and preach this to all nations",

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has been shown by that scholarship to be a later interpolation in the Gospel. And to their great credit, some of the editions of the Bible — not those distributed in India — mention that fact in a footnote, that the earlier versions of this Gospel end here and do not contain the subsequent passages. But you do not inform us of that. So, on your own criterion you are creating tensions.

As my last plea, I will also end with the same prayer that you read out from Mother Teresa. But I will show you, Sir, how far the Church has to go yet in becoming more like Jesus. That very prayer should open our eyes. The last part of it is very beautiful:

*Lord grant that I may seek rather to comfort
than to be comforted,
To understand than to be understood;
To love than to be loved.
For it is by forgetting the self that one finds.*

How beautiful and how Upanishadic it is. By forgetting the self, we find. That is exactly the point.

*It is by forgiving that one is forgiven.
It is by dying that one awakens to eternal life.*

That is exactly what the Upanishads say, no problem. Now just see the first part of the prayer:

*Make us worthy Lord to serve our fellowmen
throughout the world;
Who live and die in poverty and hunger.*

Okay, no problem.

*"Give them through OUR hands, their daily bread,"
Why only through YOUR hands? (Applause)* That is the obsession of the Church. You say, the Church has given up the

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notion of salvation through itself. You read the prayer. It says, Give them through *our* hands this day, their daily bread.

"By OUR understanding love, give peace and joy."

Why not, "Give peace and joy"? Why "through *our* understanding love"? But for the Communists, you must get everything through the Party. Here you must get everything through this Radio-station.

"Lord make ME a channel of the peace."

Why not, "Lord, let there be peace"?

"Where there is hatred, I may bring love."

There is the contrast. *Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya*, from darkness lead us to light. Not through *me*. (*Applause*) From death to immortality, not through *me*. But just lead us there.

Give them through OUR hands this day, their daily bread and by OUR understanding love, give peace and joy. Lord make ME a channel of peace. Where there is hatred, I may bring love. Where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness. Where there is discord I may bring harmony. Where there is doubt, I may bring faith. Where there is despair, I may bring hope. Where there is shadow, I may bring light. Where there is sadness, I may bring joy.

Having said this, you say, "It is by forgetting the self that one finds." How many 'I-S' and 'ME-S'! So, I would plead with the Church, yes, act on Mother Teresa's prayer. Give up this obsession with yourselves. (*Applause*)

But there is also the other thing. I am sure that everybody here realises that it is only a Christian who would have come to a dialogue like this. (*Applause*) Everyone realises that it is only to a Christian that a person like me could have spoken like this. (*Applause*) This is the testimony — and not Father's

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speech, not Father's article. This is testimony to the loss of political power as well as to the new spirit of Christianity.

And in that new spirit we are all together. Thank you ever so much. (*Applause*)

Questions and Answers

Members of the audience had been sending questions addressed to each speaker. Each of them had dozens and dozens in his hands. The President asked them to answer the ones they could in the few minutes allotted to each.

Fr. Augustine: With regard to conversion that is going on in our country, I think, if you look at the overall situation in most of the States, I would say that except for North-East, particularly in Arunachal Pradesh, there is no significant number of conversions taking place in any other areas. For example, in Andhra Pradesh if you ask how many people are converted, that is a very small number. So, it is not an all India phenomenon as a significant number. Certain pockets, I mentioned. I also substantiated in the book, statistics that I have given—Growth and the Changes.

Will our tension stop with communal turmoil etc? There are tensions and conflicts in our country, due to various factors and reasons. One of them is communal or religious. I agree, to the extent that communal or conversion movement etc., is diminished, it will definitely remove the misunderstanding and

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apprehensions. But the sources of conflicts are probably more powerful — sources in political, economical and other areas. These forces will definitely continue to create different tensions. The only exclusive source is not the Mission. I want you to know how far the Christian Mission has succeeded in Indianising Christianity in India and how far it appreciates the positive theology of other religions in the name of rationality, rationalism, tolerance etc.

I think, some explanation was already given and also Mr. Arun Shourie pointed out in his book — he has analysed to what extent Christianity is trying to become more contextualised or inculturated or adapted or is adapting itself. But again, I submit that the process of inculturation and adaptation is not taking place at required pace. In some areas, there is more resistance. For example, where Christianity is older, it is more rooted in tradition, the openness for change is less. While the openness towards inculturation is much more in the new, if you want to say, younger churches.

The process of rationality and rationalism and tolerance, to some extent, definitely is with us. Mr. Arun Shourie has said that these changes are taking place in the Church also under the influence of rationalism. Therefore, there is always a need for a process of re-interpretation of our religious understanding, our religious texts and our religious practices in the light of rationality. One of the major criteria for changes both for Christianity and other religions definitely is rationality. Whether we like it or not, it will come upon us gradually in the process of modernisation. So, as it seems to me to take a lesson from history is important. What we have to learn is that to what extent we are willing to accept the need for adaptation and adaptability. According to the principle of Social Darwinism or evolution, principle of adaptability and adaptation is an essential part for the survival and

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the growth of individuals as well as communities.

Question: You said, history has to be studied objectively. You have again emphasised that we have to neglect the activities of the missionaries that existed a century back. Respected Sir, how is it possible to neglect the past? History is a dialogue with the past.

Answer: I do not say we should neglect. We should be serious students of history. We must learn from history. We must study it, avoiding the mistakes of the past and to learn to become wise. Therefore, naturally I understand that the historical wounds are offending still. Many people are feeling hurt when they study history e.g. lots of college students, or when you read further as scholars other materials and you realise that these foreign missionaries and these colonisers were talking, thinking and writing about us in such a fashion, naturally we feel offended. This feeling of offence, hurtfulness takes place in both ways — when the Christian missionaries are attacking our Hindu brothers or people of other religions, the same way when the people of Hindu religion attack the Christian missionaries they also feel offended. But this is a very human, natural reaction. We must rise above these human sentiments and proceed in the process of rational dialogue and mutual collaboration.

Question: After all is said and done, can you on behalf of yourself and of the Christian missionaries working in India and among the Hindus outside India as well, at least from now onwards, from the date you may fix for yourself, say that you will dispense with propagation of Christianity among Hindus so that they may forgive you for the past mistakes? (*Clappings.*)

Answer: Well, I mentioned that I can ask my pardon and apologise. There are many people who may not agree with me. I cannot speak for everybody. I said that the Church

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officially, that is, the Catholic Church and the major part of the Protestants Churches — I agree there are some minor groups which are fundamentalists — do not approve any kind of propaganda. But at the same time, there must be sufficient freedom for anyone. If they feel attracted and convinced that they want to follow a path which they choose, even within the Hindu tradition, we know that the Hindu ...

There are many other questions. We do not have enough time for both of us spoke for a lot of time. Naturally, therefore, time for answering all the questions is limited. I am sorry about it. I tried to answer some of them. I appreciate the interest you have shown. I want to summarise and say that the Mission of today and the Mission of tomorrow is a very different Mission. There are limitations of passing from the old mind-set individually and collectively to the new mind-set and the changing situations. Therefore, these changes cannot be brought out in a hurry. But we must open the process of this transformation.

Therefore, I do not, as in the past, believe that salvation is only in the Church. Salvation is available for everybody. That is the official teaching of the Church, that God loves everybody and wills that all should return to him. There is only one plan, the loving plan of God, that he provides the required means to return to him as long as we make sincere efforts. It is not a question whether you are a Hindu or a Muslim. The question is, whether we are committed to goodness, love, truth, justice and humanity. Inhumanity can also be present in Christianity. Inhumanity is also present outside Christianity. Holiness and grace is present in Hinduism. It is also touched and mixed with human weaknesses of many other kinds. Therefore, the question is not changing the boundaries of institutional religion. Our Mission for the future is a transformation for these higher values, which are

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found in everybody. Therefore, I believe and propose for a mission that is mutual, a mission that is contributing that we have to help each other for a conversion, in the sense of an inner conversion, a change of heart towards God and a change of heart towards our brothers and sisters, seeing them as our brothers and sisters. This is the mission we have to do, not changing sociological institutions. In this process, I am inviting for a new movement in the Mission, that is mutual mission. Thank you.

Organiser. Now it is Mr. Arun Shourie's turn to answer some of the questions. I would like to apologise to many of you whose questions I am not asking to them because of lack of time. But the flow of their speeches and arguments would have answered many of your questions.

Arun Shourie. There are several questions and I will answer only five of them because all of you will be tired by now. I will do that very briefly. I think, the best thing that has been said has been said by Father Augustine just now. When the Church actually comes to practise what Father has said just now — that it is his personal belief that salvation is possible in all religions, that it is the common aspiration of all religions to induce us to better conduct and goodness — then, I assure you, there will be no problem at all. But it should not be your personal, private belief only. It should be the conduct of the Church. When I quote Gandhiji, you say, "Arrey, that is 1930s. This is 60 years after that." But what you have said just now is exactly what Gandhiji used to say. You have now come to accept Gandhiji's position. When he was repeatedly asked, what is your advice to the missionaries, he said, "By your life and conduct, persuade others that Jesus has shown you the light." There will then be no problem, no quarrel. So, I hope, that will be the great beacon and what is

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today Father Augustine's personal belief shall become the operational principle of the Church. (*Applause*)

A questioner asks, what is the purpose of your writing this book at this time? I was invited to give a lecture. The person who presided, one of them, said, "It has been a feast for us." They were most friendly and generous. I wrote it in that spirit. I am very heartened by the fact that, unlike what was presented today, several Christians have written in Christian journals and in newspapers that these are the questions which the Church should be considering and that Christians themselves should have asked these questions of the Church.

I also had another purpose. And that purpose was the study of imperial policy and of the genes which that imperial policy put in our minds; that is stated clearly in the book. There is no hidden agenda of the book !

A good question has been asked of me. But it is a good point for Father Augustine to remember. When he talks of Hanuman being the servant, Hanuman being worshipped by Harijans, and being the servant of Ram, Harijans being servants of Brahmins, actually, Sir, Harijans in Bihar and U.P. are the servants of Yadavs and Kurmis, these Other Backward Castes, which you are striving so hard to patronise. Harijans are the landless labourers. Land is now owned by Yadavs and Kurmis, as Mandal's own report shows. Mandal, not having read his own report, writes there that the killings and massacres of the Harijans are being done by their masters, the Yadavs, the Kurmis whom you are patronising today. These castes are not backward castes, they are the dominant, the domineering castes. I can assure you that Hanumanji is as dear to high caste Hindus as to low caste Hindus. If after 2000 years of Christianity in India and 200 years of diligent scholarship, this is your understanding of India, much needs to be done.

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But there is a question which has been asked by a member of the audience:, which is a pertinent question to ask of you: Does the servant and master relationship, high caste and low caste relationship also apply to the other Hindu Gods? If not, then, how does your thesis stand? Nandi is ridden by Shiva. Is it that the low caste people are asked to worship Nandi? And the high castes should not worship Nandi? What you have written in your article is a foolish thing to write.

The third question is really very interesting. Two persons who must obviously be Christians have done a most un-Jesus like thing. Jesus would never say something and disown it. But here are two questions which have been written and not signed. Just see the tenor of the question, and you will see, Father, how much more you have to work, to convert Christians to your way of thinking. The question is this:

"Hinduism patronises jogins (temple prostitutes) to serve devotees, devdasis, temple dancers, to achieve bliss. The erotic and sensual architecture in temples such as Khajuraho temples, Ajanta and Ellora Caves proves the point. Ling, male and female organs, dirty representation of dances with exaggerated protuberances. Is this a religion which gives equal rights to women?"

The question has not been signed. That is not the spirit which Father Augustine said the Church now advocates. I am sure it was not these poor sisters who were sitting here and who have just left who wrote this question, but obviously it has not been written by a Hindu. (Someone in the audience: "Ignore the question.") Why ignore it ? That is the point — that the name is not there.

Another question. *"Mr. Arun Shourie, you did not want to accept the mistake pointed out by Fr. Augustine but you yourself made a great mistake by saying that there is a ge-*

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nealogy in Mark's Gospel, when there is no genealogy in Mark's at all."

I am not sure what I said, whether it was Mark or not. But as this is the kind of thing which is said, I will now give you the precise facts.

In the New Testament the genealogy of Jesus is given in two places, once in the Gospel according to Mathew and another in the Gospel according to Luke. Speaking orally, I said, Mark. It is Mathew. Both give the names beginning from David down to Joseph, the husband of Virgin Mary, the Mother of Jesus. On Mathew's reckoning, David is followed seriatim by 25 others whom he lists before we get to Joseph. In Luke, by 40. Apart from the first and last names in the series, that is the names of David and Joseph, our authors have not one name in common. It is not that the names of who succeeds whom are common and that it is just that in a few places the order is different. No, not one name in one list so much as occurs in the other.

Moreover, as Tom Paine asked many years ago — in a book whose title Father Augustine would certainly like — it was called *The Age of Reason* — he asked, what is the point of listing the 25 or 40 fathers and grandfathers of Jesus? Because Jesus, being the son of God, having been born to a Virgin had no father at all! (*Applause*)

So, if I said Mark, it should have been Mathew. But I can assure you that the fact I reported is absolutely correct.

The last point I wanted to take up is here in a question, it was in Father Kanjamala's remarks also. He said, and the question says: What is the problem in the North-East? The North-East people are oppressed. Why should they not be converted? In any case, Father Kanjamala says, apart from Arunachal Pradesh, now nothing more is being done. Actually, Sir, you will find on pages 205-207 and later on pages

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234-237, a summary of the Intelligence Report showing the association of Christian groups with secessionist movements — from Phizo down to the present time.

The links of these organizations with missionaries, the support the Church groups have given to rebel organizations to advocate secession at international meetings, decisions taken at these meetings to channel funds ostensibly for “the development programmes” of organizations like the NSCN(1) — all these have been the subject of specific information received by the Intelligence authorities. Such support for secessionist groups is the greatest in Nagaland, followed by Manipur — I will come to Arunachal Pradesh and you will see the point. In Mizoram the role of the Church is overtly political. In 1988, two separate incidents involving Fathers of the Dengtol Mission and the Sarabil Centre pointed to their association with Bodo activists. In 1992, two British nationals were caught, they had been advocating a separate Naga country through a Naga Vigil Organization and had been receiving active support from the insurgent Naga National Council (A), another group associated with the Church.

Inclinations and activities of this sort by even a part of the Church, constitute a grave danger as the influence the Church exercises in these areas is enormous. All this is in the report of the Joint Intelligence Committee.

But more than that, why is it that you are talking now only about Arunachal Pradesh? I will tell you why, and the Intelligence Report says this. The reason is that 85% of the population of Mizoram, 80% of that in Nagaland, 50% in Meghalaya has already been converted. Obviously, you do not have to do much more conversion there. It is not that you are being generous. Now you are or these groups in the Church are specifically targeting Arunachal Pradesh. The information with Government shows that many of the old sorts

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of means continue to be used to secure converts. They give specific instances — the use of paid agents to cultivate contacts; provision of board and lodging facilities to potential converts on their visit to the foothills; the payment of a price upon conversion; the payment of a price for arranging conversion; the buying off of a headman of the village so as to convert other villagers etc. That the conversions have little to do with an individual coming to realise that truth resides in Christianity is also suggested by the large numbers who are converted together at baptismal ceremonies. The reports give several examples — that a Bishop came and 350 were converted at one ceremony etc.

Intelligence reports mention that having entrenched themselves in other states, missionaries are concentrating their efforts in the strategic Arunachal Pradesh. In 1971, less than 0.8%, less than 1% of the population of this area was Christian. Today about 1/8th, over 12% of it has already been converted. That is where they took poor Mother Teresa recently. Because there is in Arunachal Pradesh an Act which prohibits anybody from doing religious activities there, Hindus or anybody, it is the Christian missionaries who want that Act to be removed. So, they take this saintly lady. Nobody is naturally going to stop her. This has created the greatest apprehension in the Intelligence community. Father, please do not be misled by your associates into telling us that you are not concentrating on the North-East, that it is only in Arunachal that some conversions are going on. Because that is precisely the target that you now want to reach.

I have taken a lot of your time. Both of us are most grateful to you for your patience and to Prajna Bharati for calling us here.

Thank you very much.

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